THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) No conclusive scientific data on the incidence of asthma due to air pollution is available.

(c) The steps taken by the Government to control environmental pollution include the following:

(1) The Government has formulated a comprehensive Policy Statement for. Abatement of Pollution which envisages integration of environmental and economic aspects of development planning, lays stress on preventive aspects of pollution, promotion of cleaner technologies to redue pollution and health related aspects;

(2) Fiscal incentives are provided for installation of pollution control equipment and also^ for the shifting of-industries from congested areas.

(3) Low lead petrol had been introduced in the four metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai w.e.f. June 1994. Subsequently, Unleaded petrol and catalytic converter fitted vehicles were introduced in the above mentioned 4 cities with effect from 1.4.1995;

(4) The Government is implementing a major plan of action for introduction of unleaded petrol and catalytic converter fitted vehicles and introduction of low sulphur diesei for cleaner diesei vehicles in a phased manner. Fuel quality standards for petrol and diesei have been notified.

(5) Gross emission standards for on-road vehicles and mass emission standards for all categories of new vehicles have been notified under the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 and are being enforced by the Departments of Transport of the various States.

(6) For control of pollution from vehicles, emission norms for both petrol and diesei driven vehicles at the manufacturing stage were introduced for the first time in 1990 and made tighter in 1996. More stringent emission norms have also been notified and will come into effect from 1.4.2000.

(7) Surveys have been conducted by the Central Pollution Control Board on the vehicular emissions in the major cities and towns in the country. The findings of the survey have been used for taking mitigative measures.

(8) The ambient air quality of various cities and towns are being monitored regularly through a network of 290 monitoring stations under the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme.

(9) Emission from highly polluting industrial units and thermal power - plants are regularly moitored by the Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Boards and action is taken against the defaulting units.

(10) Emissions and ambient air quality standards have been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Alternative fuel to curb polutloin

4153. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any measures to find out alternative fuels to curb vehicular pollution;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to make such fuels popular and readily available?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A study sponsored by the Central PoUution

Control Board of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, and carried out by the Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehra-dun has identified a number of alternate fuels such as compressed natural gas (CNG), propane, electricity and methanol as a blend with gasoline (petrol), for use by automobiles.

(c) The following steps have been taken/proposed for use of alternate fuels:

(i) The use of compressed natural Gas (CNG), an eco-friendly fuel, for use of petrol-driven vehicles is under implementation in the cities of Mum-bai, Delhi and Surat. In Delhi, CNG is being dispensed through four retail outlets and four on-line stations. About 1000 vehicles in Delhi have been fitted with CNG kits and cylinders to operate on both petrol and CNG. In Mumbai, more than 5000 taxies have been converted to use CNG. The price of CNG is lower than that of petrol.

(ii) Trial projects are on for use of other alternate fuels such as propane for three-wheeler autorickshaws and use of methanol as a blend with gasoline and diesel.

(iii) As a part of the diversification strategy of fuel use and a measure for pollution abatement strategy, the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has set up an Expert Group for use of liquified petroleum gas (LPG) as an automotive fuel and to examine:

— Infrastructure, Logistics and distribution.

— Technology, equipment design, retrofitting/equipment standardisation, fuel specification characteristics, etc.

Ulegal trade in Shahtoosh

4154. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the Asian Age dated June 7, 1998, under the heading "Wildlife Act fails to curb trade in Shahtoosh".

(b) if so, the details thereof and the number of incidents of illegal trade in Shahtoosh, which have been detected during the last three years; and

(c) what action Government propose to take to curb this trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The number of cases of illegal trade in shahtoosh, detected by the Regional offices of wildlife preservation, under this Ministry, during the last three years is as follows:

Year	No. of cases	No. of Shawls seized
1995-96	1	172
1996-97	3	20
1997-98	2	4 + wool

(c) The steps taken by the Government to prevent the illegal trade in shahtoosh are as follows:

(i) Hunting of wild animals covered under Schedules I to IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been banned by law. Tibetan antelope from which shahtoosh is derived is included in Schedule I of the Act.

(ii) This Ministry has set up a National Co-ordination Committee consisting of representatives of all major enforcement organisations such as customs. Revenue intelligence, CBI, Police, BSF, ITBP, RPF and foreign Post Office, Traffic-India and Wildlife authorities to enable effective interdepartmental co-operation and co-ordination to deal with the problem of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife prpducts.

(iii) Training programmes on enforcement and implementation of wild-